

## Expeditionary Learning

Literature review updated August 2013.

As part of WSIPP's research approach to identifying evidence-based programs and policies, WSIPP determines "what works" (and what does not work) to improve outcomes using an approach called meta-analysis. For detail on our methods, see our [technical documentation](#). At this time, WSIPP has not yet calculated benefits and costs for this topic.

Program Description: Expeditionary Learning (EL) is a model of whole school reform that uses an approach of inquiry-, project- and problem-based study (e.g., learning concepts and procedures then applying them to real-life contexts). Generally, EL does not have a prescribed curriculum. One of the instructional characteristics of EL schools is the use of EL teacher-designed curriculum that can be a six-week to a year-long in-depth learning expedition. Expeditions can be in the form of a fieldtrip, hands-on project in class, content-related guest speakers, live performances, or other active tasks. Unlike traditional schools, learning expeditions often integrate multiple subject areas in one expeditionary program. The studies included in this analysis use an Outward Bound-based approach. The evidence suggests that expeditionary learning has no consistent impact on student test score outcomes. We present the findings for reading scores here.

### Meta-Analysis of Program Effects

Outcomes measured	Primary or secondary participant	No. of effect sizes	Treatment N	Unadjusted effect size (random effects model)		Adjusted effect sizes and standard errors used in the benefit-cost analysis					
						First time ES is estimated			Second time ES is estimated		
				ES	p-value	ES	SE	Age	ES	SE	Age
Test scores	Primary	7	4149	0.016	0.807	0.008	0.066	10	0.005	0.041	17
High school grad via test scores	Primary	n/a	0	n/a	n/a	0.001	0.011	18	0.001	0.011	18

## Citations Used in the Meta-Analysis

Amoruso, M., Bontempo, B., & Wilson, D. (2010). *The relationship between ELS participation and academic growth*. Mountain Measurement, Inc.

UMASS. (2011). *Impacts of expeditionary learning model on student academic performance in Rochester, New York*. Amherst, MA: UMASS Donahue Institute Research and Evaluation Group.

Van Winkle, T. (2008). *Expeditionary Learning Schools: The relationship between implementation gains and growth in student achievement (Doctoral dissertation)*. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI).

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